Section 2
Indians / First People in the Oregon Country

Prehistory of Oregon

More than twelve thousand years ago, the land that today is known as Oregon was covered with forests, mountains, and high desert. Scientists have named this time in history the Paleo-Indian Period. Paleo (PAY-lee-oe) means “ancient” or “long-ago.” People who lived in ancient Oregon were Indians. They were the first Oregonians. It is some present-day Indians’ belief that the Creator created their people on the North American continent and that they have always lived here.

We know little about these Indians because they did not leave any written record of their lives. Scientists known as archaeologists have learned about these Indians by studying the drawings and objects that they used and left behind. These objects are called artifacts. Archaeologists use artifacts like puzzle pieces, each one tells part of the story of a past culture. Used in conjunction with other evidence found in a site, such as bones from animals and other food remains, pollen, and remains of structures, archaeologists can, in theory, reconstruct the site and how the people lived at that time. It is very important that people visiting archaeological sites do not pick up, move, or remove artifacts, as it makes if difficult for an archaeologist to accurately interpret a site when some of the pieces to the puzzle are missing.

Some of the most interesting clues about the early people of Oregon are found in rock art. Petroglyphs, or rock carvings, are some of the earliest known forms of written communication of people in the western hemisphere. No one is sure exactly what the figures meant to these early people. Many of them seem to show things in their daily lives, some show people and animals, others might show the power of nature, such as the rain or the sun. Still others are abstract and more difficult to interpret. Their meanings are unknown.

Some other artifacts archaeologists have found are stone projectile points, which were used for spears. From these artifacts, archaeologists have learned that the ancient Indians were hunters. They used spears to hunt large animals that are now extinct, such as ancient bison, wooly mammoth, and giant sloths. The Indians threw spears at these animals using a spear-thrower, called an atlatl that helped them throw the spears harder and farther.

The Indians at this time probably lived on a seasonal cycle, knowing when and where to hunt and gather food. They would have returned to the same camp locations annually. Historically, some of the Indians of the Columbia Plateau including the Cayuse, made their life in a similar manner.**

**This same text can also be found under the Social Studies section of this guide and has been set up as a question and answer activity sheet for students.

Indian Children

Educating the young in the traditions of their culture has always been an important and honored task for grandparents. Grandmothers often made traditional items of dress for their grandchildren. Grandparents were often responsible for moral instruction. Grandmothers would teach their granddaughters hide curing, clothing construction and ornamentation. A very strong tie with young and old was maintained.

Babies were kept in beaded cradle boards during their first year. The children learned at an early age to take pride in their ceremonial dress. Feathered headwear was made for children. Children often wore similar styles of clothing worn by their parents.

Gifts of new or special clothing were given at birthdays, recognition of honors or awards earned, graduation from school, etc.. These items were highly treasured and kept during much of the person's life. These gifts were a symbol of respect.

There were certain ceremonies or festivals held for children. They celebrated a child's first roots or first game ceremony where gifts were given to honor the accomplishments of a young person beginning to follow adult roles. A feast was held to celebrate a girl's first gathering of roots or a boy's first kill of wild game. The longhouse still holds an important place in the community for these coming of age ceremonies and other ceremonies of the Columbia Plateau people.

As they grew up, Indian children learned of their history and traditions so they would be prepared to raise the following generations of their people, thus creating the continuity of life that keeps a culture alive. As the Euro-Americans entered the area, Indian children were taught at the mission, where they had the opportunity to learn housekeeping, sewing, reading, writing, and farming as well as religion.

Indian Tribes of Northeastern Oregon
General Information

The Plateau Indians live in the area between the Cascade Mountains and the Rocky Mountains and north of the Great Basin. Much of this area is high flat land, but there are also mountains, canyons, and many rivers and valleys. Part of this area is now the eastern part of the state of Washington, including the place that is now the city of Walla Walla. Some of the tribal names were Snake, Cayuse, Umatilla, Yakima, Spokane, Palouse, and Walla Walla; all familiar place names in this area today. The groups of the Plateau moved from place to place throughout the year to gather edible vegetables and fruits, including camas, coush, bitter-roots, serviceberry, chokecherry, huckleberry, and wild strawberries. The gathering of these plants is still a traditional way of life among many of the people of these tribes today.

They made woven bags out of grasses, such as rye grass, bear grass, or hemp. The bags which varied in shape and size, were used for carrying a harvest, transporting

items, or for carrying personal belongings.

Their homes were movable tipis made of poles covered with mats made of tule (pronounced too-lee) reeds, a tall, tough reed that grows marshy areas and sometimes called bulrush. In winter they made more permanent homes. They dug a pit a few feet into the ground and constructed a framework of poles over it which was then covered with the tule mats. Earth was piled up around and partly over the structure to provide insulation. In later years, canvas was used instead of tule mats.

In addition to hunting and gathering, these Indians were fishermen, with salmon making up a major part of their food supply. When horses came to the area, the world of the Plateau people expanded, allowing them to trade with the tribes on the plains east of the Rocky Mountains for things such as bison meat and hides. Groups of hunters rode far to hunt bison, deer, and elk.

Nez Perce Indians

The Nez Perce live in the valleys of the Clearwater and Snake Rivers and their tributaries. Originally dwelling in fishing villages along rivers, they built large, multi-family lodges of timbers topped with grass, tule, and cattail mats. Salmon was the mainstay of their diet. The Nez Perce also hunted in the woodlands, and dug the bulbs of the camas lily on the high plateaus. Often, several villages formed a loose confederation, or band, so that resources could be pooled for long hunting trips or war.

Spanish invaders introduced horses into North America during the 16th century, but it was a long time before Indians had them in large numbers. The Nez Perce acquired horses perhaps as early as the end of the 17th century. These Indians took great care with their horse herds. They selectively bred their horses by gelding or trading away inferior specimens and importing superior breeding stock. This produced well built, strong horses that were highly prized. The tribe especially favored the colorful, spotted Appaloosas, an ancient breed which the Nez Perce diligently perfected.

They quickly adapted to the new mobility horses provided. Bands of Nez Perce crossed the Rocky Mountains and met, traded with, and fought Indians on the high, northern plains. They hunted bison and lived in skin-covered tepees. They adopted the eagle-feather headdress, horse accessories, games and customs from their new acquaintances. Even the many Nez Perce who remained in the traditional homelands could not help but be affected.
By the time of the American Revolution, the Nez Perce had begun to feel the impact of a new people from another land. Their first meeting with the whites took place in September, 1805 when Lewis and Clark led a small group across the Bitterroot Mountains into Nez Perce country. The Nez Perce received them graciously, gave them supplies, and told them about the river to the Pacific.

Soon, fur trappers and traders, both British and American, entered the region. In 1836, Presbyterian missionaries, Henry Harmon Spalding and his wife, Eliza, arrived with the

Whitman party and chose to settle at Lapwai, near present-day Lewiston, Idaho. Reverend Spalding was more successful in his attempts to convert the Indians and had several Nez Perce baptized into the Presbyterian Church. The mission ended in 1847 when the Whitman Killings occurred at Waiilatpu, one hundred miles west of Lapwai. In 1846, Britain and the United States made a boundary line at the 49th Parallel. The Nez Perce found themselves surrounded by the United States with this division of the Oregon Country.

Washington Territory, which included all of Washington, Idaho and part of Montana, was formed in 1853, and its governor, Isaac Stevens, wanted to divide up Indian lands in that territory into reservations. He called the leaders of the Nez Perce together in Walla Walla in 1855. An agreement was reached that reserved most of the Indian traditional homeland as their exclusive domain.

The discovery of gold on the Nez Perce Reservation in 1860 raised calls from the Euro-Americans who wanted a smaller reservation that would exclude the gold fields. So, in 1863, a new reservation, containing only one-tenth of the land originally set aside, was proposed to the tribe. Lawyer, a pro-American Nez Perce, Christian leader, and his followers accepted the plan and signed the treaty. Other Nez Perce leaders rejected it, giving rise to the “treaty” and “non-treaty” designations of the respective factions.

The Americans, claiming that Lawyer represented the entire tribe, asserted that the agreement was binding to the entire tribe, but to the Nez Perce, this was not true, or even possible. Lawyer could only sign away his land, not land belonging to the rest of the tribe. After President Andrew Johnson signed the treaty in 1867, the United States government launched a campaign to move all the Nez Perce onto the reservation.

The Nez Perce leaders who had not signed the treaty and who lived off the new reservation ignored the orders. Foremost among them was Old Joseph, who led a band that lived in Oregon’s Wallowa Valley. Young Joseph, who succeeded his father, hoped that a peaceful solution could be found, for he did not wish to go to war or to leave his home. In May, 1877, the non-treaty Nez Perce were told that the U.S. Army would forcibly move them onto the reservation. So in early June, Joseph and his people crossed the Snake River into Idaho and camped near Tolo Lake while preparing to move onto the reservation by the June 14 deadline.

On the morning of June 13, three young Nez Perce men, angered at what was happening and seeking revenge for the murder by a Euro-American of one of their fathers, rode out into the dawn. By midday of June 14 they had killed four settlers. Joined by 17 other Nez Perce, the group killed 14 or 15 settlers in the next two days. Knowing that General Oliver O. Howard would retaliate, the Indians headed for White Bird Canyon. There on June 17, 1877, a small body of warriors imposed a crushing defeat on a superior force of soldiers, killing 34 and losing none. Neither group emerged victorious from skirmishes at Cottonwood in early July and a battle on the Clearwater on July 11 and 12. At Weippe the non-treaties decided to cross Lolo Pass into Montana in the hope that they could escape the war and live there in peace. The bands, totaling

about 750 men, women, and children, hoped also that their bison-hunting friends, the Crows, would help them.

In all their hopes, they were disappointed. More and more soldiers came after them, eventually totaling more than 2,000. Instead of helping, the Crows harassed them, some serving as guides for the Army. At Big Hole, August 9 and 10, they lost between 60 and 90 lives in a surprise attack by U.S. troops and volunteers. Still they managed to elude the United States Army until October when they were forced to surrender just 42 miles short of the Canadian border and refuge. Young Chief Joseph is known for his speech “I will fight no more forever...”.

The last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century were difficult ones for the Nez Perce. White values and culture were forced upon them by the missionaries and government officials. The General Allotment Act of 1887 gave individual Indians title to anywhere between 40 and 160 acres (the Nez Perce average was 90 acres) in the belief that ownership of land would assimilate them into the mainstream of American life more rapidly. The unallotted land was sold to the general public. Shortly, more than 70 percent of the reservation lands.

The Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla

The material contained in this document has been excerpted from the “Indian Curriculum Materials Teachers’ Manual Grades 2-4: The Culture and History of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Tribes”

Introduction

This brief writing is in no way meant to be a complete historical or cultural study of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Indian people. Its purpose is merely to provide the reader with a background and insight into the events and happenings, which have influenced the culture and unique character of the Indian people of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, Indian Reservation. Over a period of approximately 150 years, these Indian tribes underwent drastic changes that affected every aspect of tribal life. Many of these changes were destructive to the culture and economic stability of the three tribes. Efforts are being made today by Tribal people to develop a new economic base and reinforce surviving Tribal traditions. The education of non-Indians with regard to Tribal history, culture and current goals and activities are part of these efforts.

Aboriginal Territories

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation consists of three tribes: the Cayuse, Umatilla, and the Walla Walla. This confederation was established by a treaty

between the three tribes and the U.S. Government in 1855. Today tribal members of the confederation live on the Umatilla Indian Reservation near Pendleton, Oregon.

However, prior to the treaty of 1855, these three tribes inhabited a larger territory located in Southeastern Washington, and Northeastern Oregon. The Umatilla and Walla Walla tribes frequented the Columbia River, the lower regions of its tributaries, notably, the Umatilla River and Willow Creek for the Umatillas and the Walla Walla and Snake Rivers for the Walla Wallas. The Cayuse lived mostly on the upper courses of rivers draining into the Columbia as far as the Grande Ronde River, and upper sections of the Tucannon and Touchet Rivers. All three hunted east of the Columbia in the Blue Mountains. Bands camped at favorite spots during the year, but all shared the same area.

Language

The three tribes were part of a much larger culture group called the Plateau Culture. The Plateau Culture included the Nez Perce bands of Idaho and Washington, the Yakima bands of Central Washington and the Wasco and Warm Springs bands of North Central Oregon on the lower Columbia River. There were many other smaller bands and groups such as the Palouse, Wanapum, and so on. This large body of people belonged to the Sahaptin Language group and each tribe spoke a distinct and separate dialect of Sahaptin The Umatilla and Walla Walla each spoke their own separate dialect, while the Cayuse in later years spoke a dialect of the Nez Perce with whom they associated a great deal. The original Cayuse language, which is extinct today but for a few words spoken by just very few individuals on the Umatilla Reservation, is closely related to the Mollala Indian language of the Oregon Cascade Mountains.
Subsistence, Housing, and Migration

The life and culture of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Indian people revolved around the gathering of food, which in itself was a constant seasonal cycle of migration over a rather large segment of land. The principal staples of life were salmon and roots. Salmon were fished from the Columbia River and its tributaries in great quantities during the annual runs, which lasted from late spring until fall. Other types of fish such as eels, steelhead, sturgeon, suckers, whitefish, and so on, were also used in large quantities. A large variety of hooks, nets, spears, and traps were used for fishing.

Platforms suspended from bluffs and large rocks along the Columbia and other major fishing rivers were manned by fishermen with dip nets, which had long handles, and hoop nets. Men caught the fish while the women prepared and dried them on large open-air racks. Older men kept the fishing equipment in good repair.

During the fishing season, tribes from all over the Northwest, even as far away as the Great Plains traveled to the major fishing sites in the Columbia River region to trade goods and buffalo meat for dried fish. Celilo Falls on the lower Columbia River, near the junction of the Deschutes River, was probably the greatest fishing and trading site in the west, and remained so until very recent times. In the early 1950’s it was flooded over by

the backwaters of one of the Columbia River dams.

Before and after the salmon runs in the spring and fall, family groups and bands traveled from the lower Columbia Valley to the upper reaches of the numerous tributary runs such as the Umatilla River, Walla Walla River, Tucannon River, Touchet River, and the Snake River to the high mountain slopes and woodlands to gather roots and berries, and to hunt for deer and elk. The bands had established routes of migration. As they traveled, they would stop along the way at temporary camps to hunt game and dig roots.

Women were in charge of digging roots and went out in large parties to the bare and open hillsides of the Blue Mountains to dig for the coush [Kowsh] root, which was the first root to appear in early spring (in late April and early May). Coush was one of the staple vegetables although many different varieties of roots and vegetables were used. Coush is a member of the carrot family of plants. It has many clusters of tiny yellow flowers, and grows close to the ground in the and and rocky soil of the upper elevation foothills and mountain slopes of the Blue Mountains. Women used antler or hardwood stick diggers to dig the Coush root. Great quantities of the root were gathered and prepared by first cleaning and removing the dark skin and then mashing it into a meal. It was then formed into small cakes and left to dry in the sun. After it was dried it was packed away, and saved for use during winter months ahead. Other vegetables, such as camas, which is found in marshy or wet mountain meadows, were also collected in the spring. Camas was prepared by baking it in small pits in the ground.

In the fall, Huckleberries were the major crop, although other kinds of berries were gathered. Huckleberries were eaten both fresh and dried. The dried berries were cooked later in a sort of pudding. Chokecherries were gathered in the late summer and made into pemmican with dried fish and dried meat. Black moss off of pine trees was baked into a cheese kind of substance. Numerous varieties of plants, seeds, and nuts were used for food or medicines.

While women dug roots and picked berries, the men hunted. Hunting provided not only food, but also hides for clothing and bone and antlers for tools. Elk and deer were the largest and most sought after animals, although bear, antelope, and mountain sheep were also hunted. For hunting, all types of weapons such as bows, spears, knives, nets, traps, and deadfall were employed.

Since the people were on the move much of the time, housing had to be mobile too. The Plateau cultures had a very distinctive type of dwelling called the “longhouse”. This structure was constructed by first erecting two teepee like frames and placing a ridgepole connecting the two. Other poles were leaned against the ridgepole creating a structure similar in appearance to the modern day “A” frame. The entire structure, except for a doorway and smoke hole at the top, was then covered with mats made from tule, rushes or cattails. More poles were laid upon the mats to keep them in place. These lodges could be from twenty feet to one hundred and fifty feet in length and an entire family (extended family) could stay in one. When moving, the mats could easily

be rolled up. Teepees were used also, but these didn't come, into use until after the coming of the horse in the early 1700's. The teepees of the Plateau people were covered with tule mats, as they did not have a great supply of skins such as buffalo like the Plains Tribes.

The coming of the horse in the early 1700's greatly changed the lives of the Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla, and other Plateau People. it meant greater mobility and greatly expanded their accessibility to areas where subsistence foods were available. With this great advancement in mobility, Plateau people crossed the Rocky Mountains to the Great Plains to hunt for buffalo. Although this was done more commonly among the more easterly Plateau people, like the Nez Perce, it nevertheless was responsible for the introduction of many new concepts and practices among all of the Plateau people. Forms of dress, art designs, the teepee, the travois, the parfleche, the custom of war honors dance, and the idea of electing head men or chiefs because of their qualifications or skill as warriors instead of inheritance, are just a few of the "borrowed" and adopted practices of the Eastern Plains' culture.

The Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla people became very skillful at breeding horses (in the early 1700's). When Lewis and Clark. first came down the Columbia River, there were great herds of horses grazing the rich hills of southeastern Washington and northeastern Oregon.

Although the horse meant greater mobility, these people maintained traditional migratory patterns. The Columbia River provided an inexhaustible food supply and the plains and mountains of the Columbia Basin supplied an endless cycle of vegetable crops.

Most bands gathered at winter sites on or near the Columbia River. These sites had been used by the same people for thousands of years. The routes of migration followed ancient patterns with the band stopping at the same spot it camped at the year before. In the early spring, family bands would leave the main encampment on the river and travel to the upper lands to dig roots. They returned in time for the main salmon run in the spring and fall. When they had enough, they would return to the mountains to gather berries and hunt for game until the snows would push them back to the lowlands near or on the Columbia where they would gather together in the large wintering sites and spend the colder months. Mission, Oregon; Walla Walla, Washington; Pasco, Washington; and Umatilla, Oregon are just a few of the modem day names of where some of those old winter camping sites used to be.

Organization and Leadership

For the Indian peoples of the Plateau culture, the term "tribe" is a very misleading description of the social and political organization - in the days before the coming of the white man. What is called a tribe today was actually just A large grouping of family bands which frequented a common area, spoke a common dialect and wintered in a common location. There was no single chief or political authority which held control over

the entire band. Each family band had its own headman or spokesman who represented the band in council with other headmen. This spokesman had no more power or control over the actions of the individuals in his group other than that of persuasion and group pressure. If a headman or an individual had a disagreement with the group consensus, he merely moved elsewhere. The name like Umatilla or Walla Walla usually designated the location of one of these large encampments. Intermarriage and association among all Plateau peoples was commonplace. This probably accounted for the fact that no one tribe held claim and boundary to large geographic regions, except for that of traditional occupation and accustomed and frequent use, such as a winter camp site or spring fishing site. The Cayuse lived in one general area, the Umatilla in another and so on, but all crossed paths, associated freely and traversed and shared each others' subsistence territories at will. All friendly bands were permitted the privilege of use of the others' lands.

Conflict and Change

Prior to the coming of Europeans to the North American Continent, Indian life in the Northwest was quite stable with change taking place very slowly. What conflicts occurred between Indian peoples represented opportunities for demonstrating bravery and acquiring goods and horses. Surviving the coming winter was more of a threat to human life than battles with rival tribes.
The coming of French and British trappers, traders, and explorers to the Northwest was the first hint of the wave of white people that would shake up the Indian world with change and conflict over the next century. Yet, their influence for the moment had comparatively limited impact. The early trappers introduced the products of modern technology on a broad scale: rifles, iron pots, blankets, cloth, beads, and cattle. Any conflicts that developed at this time between the Indians and the Whites were usually settled by the payment of goods to the Indians.

Most influential was the introduction of the rifle into conflicts among Indians. The result was that battles between enemy tribes assumed more serious and dangerous proportions.

Fort Nez Perce (later named Fort Walla Walla) established in 1818 became a center for economic exchange and socializing for Indians and Whites both. Intermarriage between white traders and Indian women became common. It was here that the Indians were first exposed to Christianity. Christianity introduced new concepts of right and wrong and punishment for wrong-doing.

It was at this point then that the integrity of the Tribal cultures began to disintegrate in a noticeable way. As some Indians adopted Christian beliefs and practices and others did not, religious factions began to develop that are prevalent on the Umatilla Reservation today.
Christianity altered the Indian world further when missions were built in the heart of Indian country. A Catholic mission was established at Mission, Oregon outside of Pendleton. Two protestant missions were built, one at Waiilatpu near Walla Walla,

Washington and one at Lapwai, Idaho.

The goal of the missionaries was to bring the teachings of Christianity to the Indians. Inherent in their teachings was the effort to change the Indian's way of life. The Protestant and Catholic missionaries simultaneously solicited the allegiance of the Indian population, each denouncing the other's religious doctrine. Both condemned the ancient ways of the Indian peoples.
When a measles epidemic hit the area and hundreds of Indians died, Dr. Marcus Whitman, founder of the mission at Waiilatpu, doctored many of them unsuccessfully. Suspicion and fear of Whitman grew as the number of deaths increased. Some Indian people held him responsible for the deaths and feared that he wished to destroy them all.

A constantly increasing flow of settlers into the area only aggravated the uneasiness developing among the Indians. The presence of the settlers was a constant reminder of the contrast between the two lifestyles. The Tribal people were being urged to become sedentary farmers, a concept completely contradictory to the traditional migratory way of life.
The situation erupted when, in 1847, a small band of Cayuse attacked the Mission, killing Whitman and his wife. The buildings were burned and the mission personnel taken captive. The hostages were taken back to the Cayuse encampment near Mission, Oregon (Nicht-Yow-Way). The Catholic Mission near the Cayuse encampment was not harmed. The fur company at Fort Nez Perce bargained for the return of the survivors and the governor of the Oregon Territory sent the Oregon volunteers to cool the situation. Although the raid was performed by an individual band acting on its own, threat of an all out war was issued against all Indian people. Indian parties assisted in apprehending execution to appease white anger.

In 1855 the treaty establishing the Umatilla Indian Reservation was signed by U.S. Government and headmen were seen as representatives of the various Indian bands of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla. However, at the time this action was virtually meaningless to the Tribal peoples who were planning to band together with other tribes and stage a final effort to dislodge the Whites from, the Northwest once and for all. Scattered battles broke out. The plan for an all Indian uprising was never realized. (Splawn, A.J., Ka-mi-akin: The Last Hero of the Yakimas; 1958).

Weakened by years of fighting their annual food-gathering cycle disrupted, their great herds of livestock severely depleted, the majority of the Indians were forced move onto the reservation by 1860. Promises of food, clothing and other goods exchange for moving to the reservation were held out like carrots before a donkey. Behind this action on. the part of the US. Government was a growing demand on the part of White settlers for access to land surrounding the reservation which they discovered was ideal for farming.

Life on the reservation was anything but rewarding. Many of the promises extended by the government were soon forgotten. Disease, hunger and poverty soon were

widespread. All sorts of parasitic self-seekers, whiskey peddlers, land grabbers, etc., preyed upon the Indians in their weakened condition. The government restricted the number of Indians permitted to leave the Reservation to hunt and fish. Intratribal conflicts developed. The reservation land was originally Cayuse territory and the Umatillas' and Walla Wallas' presence created resentment among the Cayuse.

Sporadically, conflicts arose between the Indians, miners, immigrants and townspeople. As new techniques of dry land farming were developed, it became evident that the broad rolling hills of the reservation once thought worthless were some of the richest wheat growing country in the nation. Attempts to move the Indians else where to open their lands to farming failed. Jealousy and resentment towards the Indians grew. In 1877, the editor of Pendleton's East Oregonian stated "We favor their removal for it is a burning shame to keep this fine body of land for a few worthless Indians."
In 1885, the Slater Act was passed which provided new possibilities for white acquisition of Indian land. The act established an allotment system whereby the reservation land was parceled out by tracts. A tract of land was issued to each enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes. The dividing of land for distribution among the Indians was, first of all contradictory to Northwest Indian values:

> "The Earth was created by the assistance of the sun, and it should be left as it was ... The country was made without lines of demarcation, and it is no man's business to divide it ... The Earth and myself are of one mind. The measure of the land and the measure of our bodies are the same ... do not misunderstand me, but understand me fully with reference to my affection for the land. I never said the land was mine to do with it as I chose. The one who has the right to dispose of it is the one who created it. I claim a right to live on my land and accord you the privilege to live on yours."
>
> Chief Joseph, Nez Perce

Secondly, the act was an added strain on a greatly weakened cultural group. It deepened divisions among the reservation Indians. Individuals who once maintained large herds of horses, a mark of wealth, could no longer do so because of the development of the land for farming. Individuals who had lived in a particular location for a long time were suddenly informed that someone else possessed a legal title to the spot and had to move. While the Indian agents encouraged farming and stock raising, the high cost of maintaining farms and equipment forced most Indian farmers to lease and sell their allotments to white farmers who were already the masters of the business of farming. This resulted in the present day checker-boarding of Indian and non-Indian land on the reservation.

The construction of dams on the Columbia River in the early and mid 1900's further weakened the cultural and economic stability of the three tribes. While the 1855 treaty had established the Indians' right to continue to hunt and fish on their accustomed grounds, many ancient fishing spots were flooded by the rising waters when the dams

were built. Celilo Falls is a widely known example. They were flooded in 1957. Damage payments were made to the Columbia River tribes but the economy and culture which had existed from time immemorial was forever changed.

Many tribal members left the reservation because the means for subsistence were so limited. Government relocation programs appeared attractive in the 1950's and 60's. The programs sent Indians to urban areas to acquire saleable skills in training positions.

Unfortunately, they were promised more job opportunities than were actually available. Many families became stranded in cities and joined the swelling ranks of the urban poor. The programs served to further deplete the reservation population.

Thus, over a period of a century and a half the culture of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Indians was assailed continuously by a strong willed dominant people who considered the ways that had sustained the Indians for 20,000 years and more as primitive and valueless. The policies of the U.S. Government toward the Tribal peoples greatly disrupted the tribal cultures and the economy of the Reservation. It is the task of the generations of Indians living on and near the Umatilla Indian Reservation today to reverse the process and to develop a new cultural and economic stability.

New Growth and Cultural Rejuvenation

Scars from the now age old conflicts between Indian and non-Indian still remain. From time to time wounds are opened up again as new threats develop. Yet, many Indian people of the Umatilla Indian Reservation know they must overcome these sore spots to achieve a new level of cultural, economic and political strength. Efforts are being made through the Tribal government to bring about needed change.

The modern day organization of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is based on the General Council, consisting of all enrolled members 18 years or older of 1/4 degree or more Indian blood of the three Confederated Tribes. The General Council every other year elects by secret ballot the nine member Board of Trustees to handle all administrative and legal matters concerning the tribe. The Board of Trustees appoints committees to handle different areas of reservation life. In addition to the 1500 Tribal members, the Tribe also serves some 300 Indians of other tribes who make their home on or near the reservation.

The Board and its committees have initiated many progressive programs in the fields of education, health, housing, land use planning, job training, construction, forest management and commercial enterprises. As these programs succeed in laying a foundation for growth and raising the standards of community life. A rejuvenated cultural identity and spirit is dawning. Standing upon the shoulders of ancient tradition, the young can find new potential in their unique heritage.

Culture and Cultural Conflict

We will be learning about the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Indian Tribes. To learn about these people, we need to know some things about all people. While we are learning about these three Indian tribes, we will talk about other groups of people and see how they do things the same as or different from Indian people.

First of all, we need to know that the way of life of a group of people is called the culture of that group. People of two different cultural groups have some things in common with each other. All people must eat, all people need shelter of houses of some kind and all people wear some kind of clothes. These people are also very different from each other in many ways. People of different cultures often eat many different kinds of food, have many different kinds of houses and wear many different kinds of clothes.

When people of two different cultures meet and try to live side by side, problems can develop. If two people do not speak the same language, it is hard for one to tell the other about his way of life.

Where people live many times is what decides how people will live. In other words, where they live is one thing that decides what kind of a culture a group of people will have. For example, Eskimos live in a very cold place. Do we know by looking at the clothes they wear that they live in a cold place? Why? Let's think about what Hawaiians wear. Why do they, dress the way they do? Are Eskimo people and Hawaiian people different in all ways from each other? What are some things that are the same? They all need food and shelter and wear clothes of some kind.

Often times a group of people feel that their way of life is the best way to live, because that is the only way they know. They may try to change the way of life of other people who live differently and do things in different ways. This is what happened to Indians when the white People came.
When the first explorers (Lewis and Clark) came into the Northwest and first met with the Columbia Plateau tribes, they were welcomed and treated as friends. The Indian people gave them food and horses. In a very short span of time, French, English and American trappers and settlers came pouring into the country in growing numbers.

The settlers and the Indian people had very different ways of living and ways of looking at the world.

When the settlers arrived they thought the land was theirs to do with as they pleased, even though the Indian people had lived in the same place for thousands of years. The settlers cut down the trees to make houses, plowed up the earth to plant crops and fenced off the land to keep out animals and other people. The settlers built farms and towns and lived in one spot. They saw the earth as something that could be bought and sold.

The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Wallas' and other tribes and bands of the Columbia Plateau culture had a way of living that depended wholly upon the earth and all that grew on it. Everything in nature had a purpose. Every landmark had a legend. Every campsite had a thousand stories of past events. Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Tribe expressed the beliefs of the Plateau peoples when he said:

> "The earth was created by the assistance of the sun, and it should be left as it was...The country was made without lines of demarcation, and it is no man's business to divide it... The earth and myself are of one mind. The measure of the land and the measure of our bodies are the same...Do not misunderstand me, but understand me fully with reference to my affection for the land. I never said the land was mine to do with as I chose. The one who has the right to dispose of it is the one who created it. I claim a right to live on my land and accord you the privilege to live on yours."

Smohalla, a religious leader of the Wanapum Indians (The Wanapum Indians are of the Plateau cultural group) had this to say:

> "My young men shall never work, men who work cannot dream; and wisdom comes to us"

Each culture has had its own special conditions that it had to learn to live with. Because all cultures of the world have the human ability to think, and discover ways to solve their problems, people have learned how to live in even the most severe regions on earth. Eskimos of the arctic and the Indians of the South American jungles are alike as people but different as cultures. One lives in constant cold, snow and ice while the other lives in constant heat surrounded by trees. Each has learned how to benefit from and adapt to their own environment.

Today because of airplanes, ships and advanced communications like the telephone, the cultures of the world are in constant contact with one another. In the past the cultures were isolated and had no idea that each other existed. Before the coming of the white man, the Indian peoples of America knew nothing of any other people in the world.
When people of two different cultures come together for the first time there is often some kind of conflict because neither group understands the other. Each has its own language and ways of doing things that look and sound very strange and confusing to the other. But as people of different cultures get to know each other with the passing of time and constant association, they begin to understand one another. Understanding is a light that brings things out of darkness so that we may see them clearly.

With the light of understanding we find that all cultures have something special and valuable to add to our lives. In some cultures people have learned to make tools and machines which make the raising of food and the making of clothing and shelter easier so that all may enjoy comfort.

Other cultures have specialized in the perfection of the arts.

People of different cultures can live together in unity by understanding that the things that make cultures different from one another can only add to and make their own lives richer. Like the different flowers of a mountain meadow, each culture has its own shape, color and fragrance. Having many different colors of flowers only makes the meadow more beautiful.

Tradition

Many things we do every day are based on tradition. A tradition is something that is handed down from one generation to the next. We can understand people better if we know that many things they do are traditions that have been a part of their lives for a long time. The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Indian people live on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The Umatilla Indian Reservation is close to Pendleton in Northeastern Oregon. In many ways, modern life on the reservation is much like modern life anywhere in the United States. People live in houses, drive cars, work at jobs and children go to public schools. The people speak English, have TV's and eat many of the same food that other Americans eat. But there are things that make the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Indian people special and different from other people.

The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Indian people have a culture or way of life that has been handed down to them by their parents, grandparents and great grandparents. The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Wallas' each have their own language and traditions. Grandparents, mothers and fathers teach their children and grandchildren how to hunt, fish, dig roots, make tepees and put them up, and how to dance and sing Indian songs. All of these were traditions of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla peoples. A hundred and fifty years ago, the Indians had to learn many of these things to stay alive. Today they do many of these because it is important to them not to forget the ways of their parents and grandparents.

When traditions are strong they change very slowly. Many of the traditional ways of life are taught and practiced the same way today as they were before the White people brought their way of life to this part of the country. A celebration of thanksgiving, called Root Feast, is one tradition of the Indians here that has been passed down for a very long time.

All people have traditions. What are some of your family's traditions and how did you learn them? Some celebrate Christmas or other holidays or have special dinners on certain days. These are all traditions.

Columbia Plateau Culture

The Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla people are part of a large culture group called the Columbia Plateau.

The Columbia Plateau is a very large area of land taking in southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon and western Idaho. The major rivers of this area are the Columbia, Palouse, Snake, Yakima, Walla Walla, Umatilla, Grand Ronde and John Day.

There are many Indian Tribes living in this area. The Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla, Nez Perce, Yakima, Wasco, Tenino, Wanapurn and several other smaller bands make up the Columbia Plateau Culture. That means that all these Indian tribes are closely related and have similar languages and ways of life.

The different tribes of the Plateau culture lived in different regions. The Nez Perce lived in Idaho, close to the Snake River. The Yakimas lived in south-central Washington along the Yakima River. The Wasco and Tenino lived along the Columbia and Deschutes Rivers.

All of the Columbia Plateau tribes associated with one another, especially at certain times of the year like the spring salmon run on the Columbia River. They would come from all around and gather at places like Celilo Falls to fish for salmon and trade goods and horses.

A better description for the Plateau culture groups instead of tribes, is bands. Each tribe was actually a large grouping of family bands. Each band had its own head man. There were no chiefs of all the bands. Each band made its own decisions. The names Cayuse Tribe, Umatilla Tribe or Walla Tribe came when the first explorer found several bands camping together in one spot. If the location was Umatilla all of the bands were called Umatillas'.

Life Cycle

Until about 50 years ago, the culture of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Indians was based on a yearly cycle of travel from hunting camps to fishing spots to celebration and trading camps and so on.

The three tribes spent most of their time in the area of Northeastern Oregon and Southeastern Washington which is called the Columbia Plateau. They had lived in the Columbia River Region for thousands of years. There were no buffalo in this area. The most plentiful foods were salmon, roots, berries, deer and elk. Each of these foods could be found in different places and each was available in different seasons. This meant that the Indian people had to move from place to place from season to season to their food and prepare it to be eaten and to be saved for the winter. They followed the same course from year to year in a large circle from the lowlands along the Columbia River to the highlands in the Blue Mountains.

In the spring the tribes gathered along the Columbia River at places like Celilo Falls to fish for salmon and trade goods with other tribes. They dried the salmon and stored it for later use. In late spring and early summer they traveled from the Columbia to the foot hills of the Blue Mountains to dig for roots which they also dried. In late summer

they traveled to the upper mountains to pick berries and to hunt for deer and elk. In the fall the tribe would return to the lower valleys and along the Columbia River again to catch the fall salmon run. All would stay in winter camps in the low regions until spring when the whole cycle would start all over again.

Salmon, Roots, Berries, Deer and Elk

The earth provided all the food the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla peoples needed:

> "I wonder if the ground has anything to say? I wonder if the ground is listening to what is said? I wonder if the ground would come alive and what is on it? Though I hear what the ground says. The ground says, it is the great spirit that placed me here. The great spirit tells me to take care of the Indians, to feed them alright. The great spirit appointed the roots to feed the Indians on. The water says the same thing. The great spirit directs me, feed the Indians well. The ground, water and grass say, the great spirit has given us our names. We have these names and hold these names. The ground says, the great spirit has placed me here to produce all that grows on me, trees and fruit. The same way the ground says, it was from me man was made. The great spirit, in placing men on the earth, desired them to take good care of the ground and to do each other no harm...
>
> Young Chief
> 1855 Treaty Council

The salmon was the first to appear in early spring. Family bands gathered along the Columbia River at their favorite or traditional fishing sites to catch and dry enough salmon to use for the year ahead. During the salmon runs, the fish traveled up every creek and river that emptied into the Columbia. There were so many that it was said that you could walk across a creek on the backs of salmon.

The men hooked, netted, trapped and speared huge quantities of fish. A very common net was the long handled dip net which is still used today. Platforms made of wood were suspended from rocks or bluffs. Fishermen stood on these platforms and used their dip nets. The women cleaned the salmon and hung them on long racks to dry in the sun.

When enough salmon was dried and stored away in caches, the bands would prepare to move to the foothills of the Blue Mountains to dig roots.

The couse root (Kowsh) with its bright flowers turned the late spring and early summer hillsides of Eastern Oregon yellow. Women dug the roots with diggers made of hardwood or antlers. The roots were mashed together and shaped into small biscuits and dried in the sun. The biscuits were stored away for later use.

In the late summer, the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla peop1e would move to the

upper mountains to pick huckleberries and hunt for game. The berries and meat were also dried. Chokecherries were pounded to make pemmican. Black moss gathered from pine trees was baked to make a cheese-like food. Camas bulbs were dried or baked.

Every food the Indian people needed was provided by the earth. The Indian people were very grateful to the creator for providing for them. Thanksgiving ceremonies were held in the spring to give thanks for the new foods. One of those, the Root Feast, is still celebrated today on the Umatilla Reservation. Although salmon is not as plentiful as it was before the dams were built on the Columbia, many of the Indian people of the Umatilla Indian Reservation still eat traditional foods like roots, berries, deer, elk and salmon as part of their every day diet.

Housing and Transportation

In the old days the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla people had to have housing that was easy to move from place to place because they had to travel much of the time to gather food. The Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla and other Plateau tribes had a special kind of tent that no other Indian people used. It was called a longhouse. The longhouse was made out of lodge poles much like a teepee, only much longer. It could reach up to 80 feet in length. The longhouse resembled the modern day “A” frame house in appearance. The covering was made out of “tule” mats. The long skinny-leafed tule plants grow along rivers and ponds. They were gathered, dried and strung together to make mats. The mats were placed on the poles and tied down. When the family wished to move they simply removed the mats and traveled on to the next camp. The poles were left behind because it was much easier to have a set of poles at each camp.

Beginning in the early 1700’s the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla people raised great herds of horses. Having horses made it possible for them to travel great distances from the lowlands along the Columbia River to the upper reaches of the Blue Mountains to gather and harvest the seasonal crops of wild foods. They also traveled across the Rocky Mountains to trade dried roots and salmon to Midwestern tribes who had buffalo meat and hides. They also learned how to make tepees from the Midwestern tribes and sometimes used buffalo hides to cover the poles with; although this was never as common as tule mats. Another item borrowed from the tribes east of the Rocky Mountains was the travois. A travois was two long poles tied together and pulled along by a horse. This was how they carried their belongings.

Today the Indian people of the Umatilla Reservation live in houses, but they still use tepees on special occasions, like traditional celebrations or camping in the mountains. However, the teepees are now covered with canvas instead of tule mats.

The Indian Family, Band

The Indian families are quite often “extended families” or families that include aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins all living together.

In the past what we call tribes today were actually large groups of family bands who all lived in a certain general location. For instance, the Walla Wallas' were several closely related bands living around the area of Wallula, Washington and up and down the Columbia River. Separate bands usually went their own ways during the food gathering seasons and regrouped in the winter season to camp together in an accustomed or traditional location. This was the same with the Cayuse and Umatilla.

The entire family - parents, children, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents - all lived together in a band. This kind of family is an extended family. There was a lot of work to be done and everyone had a job to do. The men and boys hunted, fished, made arrows, weapons and tools and took care of the horses. The women and girls cooked, dried fish and meat, dug roots, picked berries, made clothes and beautiful decorations. The women also set up and tended to the tepees. If someone didn't do their job they all might freeze or go hungry during the winter.

Each band had a headman or leader who made important decisions and represented his band in council or other important occasions. The headman had no power to make others do what he wanted them to, other than by convincing them that his way was the best. It was the same with other headmen. There were no headmen or chiefs of all the bands except in times of emergencies, like war. Then the bands would get together and select war leaders and would usually (but not always) follow their lead. In times of peace these leaders had no authority.

During the Treaty Council of 1855 which assigned the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla people to the Umatilla Reservation, it was the headman of a few of the bands that spoke for all the Indian peoples. The U.S. Government representatives wanted certain individual headmen to make the important decision to give up the Indian lands. The government said that these persons had the authority to sign the Treaty and sell the land when in actuality they had no more right to sell another band's property or right to live in an area than someone today has to sell his next door neighbor's property.

Today the Indian people of the Umatilla Indian Reservation still have large or extended families but many things are different. Until recently, life was hard and a large family was needed simply to survive. The old ways of food gathering, hunting and fishing for a living were still very common until about 40 years ago when dams built on the Columbia and hunting restrictions forced the people to adopt modern ways of life. Now the individual family members work separately at jobs and professions. Having separate jobs has caused the traditional Indian family to break up into smaller family units with just a father, mother and children. This is called a nuclear family. Often times they moved away from the reservation entirely for work somewhere else. Even so, Indian people love to get together for traditional celebrations and special occasions. It is very common for Indian people to travel long distances and camp together at Rodeos and Indian celebrations all over the west and Midwest. Many people take time off from their jobs and school to attend these gatherings.

There are two different kinds of families; the extended and nuclear. The extended includes aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and even friends. Many Indian families are extended families. The nuclear family includes only father, mother and children.

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

The Indian Reservations of the Northwest were created in the middle and late 1800's by the United States Government. The reason for reservations was to move Indians out of the way of American settlers who were discovering how rich the Columbia Plateau Region was in natural resources. The Indian tribes were given two United States Government. One was to move to a reservation and the other was to be destroyed by war. With reluctance, the Indian people chose the reservation.

The Umatilla Indian Reservation was established in 1855 for the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Indians at the Stevens Treaty Council near Walla Walla, Washington. At one time, the U.S. Government wanted to put all tribes (Nez Perce, Yakima, Cayuse, Umatilla Walla Walla Wasco, Tenino and other smaller bands) on one reservation near Yakima, Washington. The Indian peoples refused. The Governor of the Oregon Territory held treaty councils with. the various tribes and finally agreed that a separate reservation should be made for the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla, another for the Nez Perce, and another for the Yakima. In exchange for the assurance of safety, a small payment and a promise of goods and supplies, the Indian people of the Columbia Plateau gave up the land that had been theirs since time immemorial. The region they gave up equaled practically a quarter of each of the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. The Treaty also promised hunting and fishing rights as long as the mountains stand and the waters flow.

At no time before the creation of the reservations did all of the bands of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla people all live in one place. The idea of confederation was as new to the Indians as the idea of a reservation.

The first years were extremely difficult as the Indian people were not allowed to the leave the reservation without a permit. This meant that they could not gather their accustomed foods such as salmon and roots. The land which is the Umatilla Reservation was traditionally the home of the Cayuse bands. Having the Umatilla and Walla Walla cramped together in such a small space created troubles among the Tribes. Much of the land was in white ownership.

In 1948 the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho became a self-governing body under an approved constitution and bylaws. In 1961, a revised constitution and bylaws were adopted. The Nez Perce People have not lost sight of their past, living in the present, with sights set on a bright future.

Indian Tribes of the Northwest

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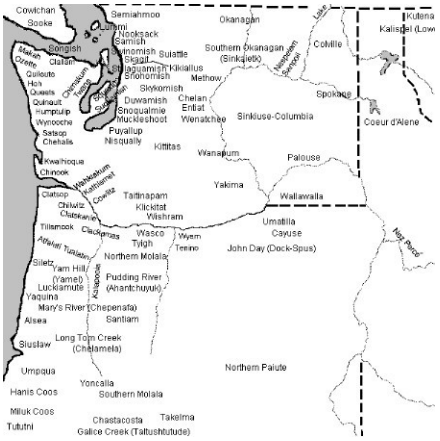
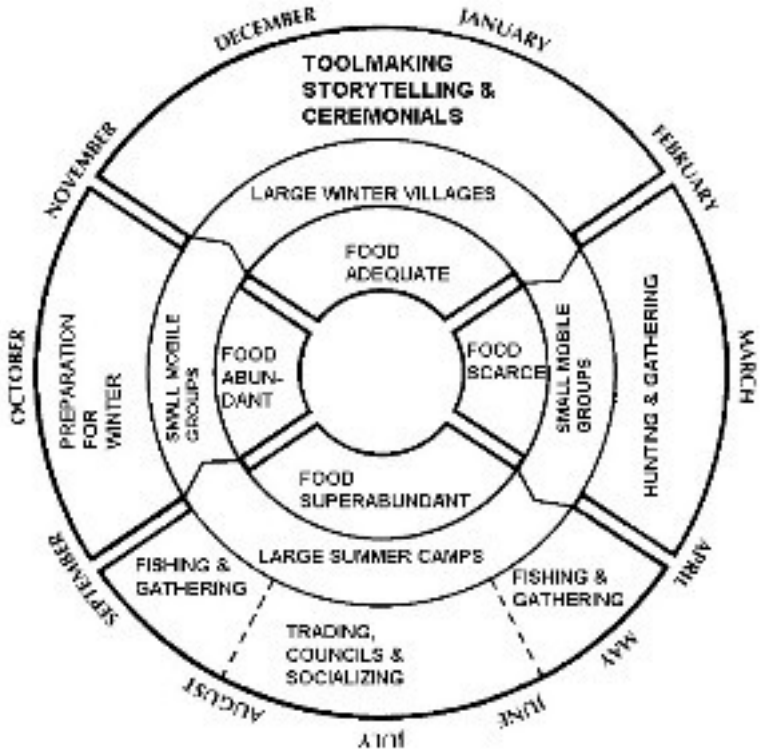


The Seasonal Cycle

Winter:



Winter was the time when groups of Columbia Plateau people settled into river valley villages that had been occupied by previous generations of their people. Sheltered from the wind and stocked with firewood the families would live on foods gathered during the previous seasons, including dried fish, berries, and roots. Occasionally they would hunt nearby deer or elk to supplement their diet. Winter was not a season of inactivity. Repair and manufacture of tools and clothes were necessary in order to be ready for another season of hunting, gathering, and fishing. Storytelling was another way to pass the time during the short days and long nights. Many of the stories could not be told at other times of the year or it was said “a snake would crawl

up your leg". These stories taught the children the history and legends of their people, creating a link from the ancestors to the present day.

Early Spring:

Early spring sometimes meant food shortages among the people - snow still covered the mountains, fish were still scarce, berries had not yet formed on the bushes. The families who had lived together in winter villages now began to move into smaller camps away from other families in order to hunt and gather what they could.

Late Spring and Early Summer:

Mid-April to May was the time of the First-Fruits and First-Salmon ceremonies. This was a time of thanksgiving and celebration for ripening roots and fish returning to the area. Favorite fishing spots along the river were populated with men from many tribes while women gathered camas roots in the hills, marshes, and meadows. As summer arrived, different fruits ripened and other foods became available. The tribe typically moved to where they knew food to be ready for gathering, sharing the land with other tribes. The Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Nez Perce shared food gathering and hunting areas in the Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington. By mid-summer, the tribe usually had enough food gathered to concentrate on social events. The Grande Ronde Valley of Oregon was a gathering-place for tribes. Here they traded, danced, gambled, raced horses, and intermarried with other tribes, creating permanent alliances.

Fall:

Fall was again a time of renewed activity in hunting, gathering, and fishing. It was the last opportunity before the winter to obtain and store foods for the coming winter. Hides were tanned; fish, game animals, and berries were dried for food, and houses were repaired with new tule. As the snows began, the small groups that had spread out for the time of last hunting and gathering again came together in the large winter villages of their ancestors.

Nez Perce names For the Months:

The Nez Perce Indians made their living according to the seasons:
El-weht (Spring); Ta-yum (Summer); Sekh-nihm (Fall); A-nihm (Winter).

JANUARY—-We-lu-poop. Season of cold weather.

FEBRUARY—Ah-la-tah-mahl. Season of hard time to build fire.

MARCH——-Lah-te-tahl. Beginning of blossoming flowers season.

APRIL——-Keh-khee-tahl. First harvest of roots known as keh-kheet.

MAY———-Ah-pah-ahl. Season of the making of Up-pa (baked loaf) make from ground Khouse.

JUNE———Toose-te-ma-sah-tahl. Season of migrating to higher elevation to dig the roots.

JULY———Heel-lul. Season of melting snow in the mountains.

AUGUST——Tah-ya-ahl. Season of midsummer (Ta-Yum) hot weather. It is also referred to as Wa-wa-mai-kahl, when the salmon reach the canyon streams or upper tributaries to spawn.

SEPTEMBER-Pe-khoon-mai-kahl. Season of the fall salmon run going up stream or when the fingerlings journey down river to the ocean.

OCTOBER—-Hope-lul. Season when Tamarack needles are shedding and the trees turn color.

NOVEMBER—Sekh-le-wahl. Season of shedding leaves.

DECEMBER—Ha-oo-khoy. Season of the fetus in the womb of the deer.

Source of Nez Perce names for months:

Slickpoo, Allen P. Noon nee-me-poo (We, the Nez Perces): Culture and history of the Nez Perces.
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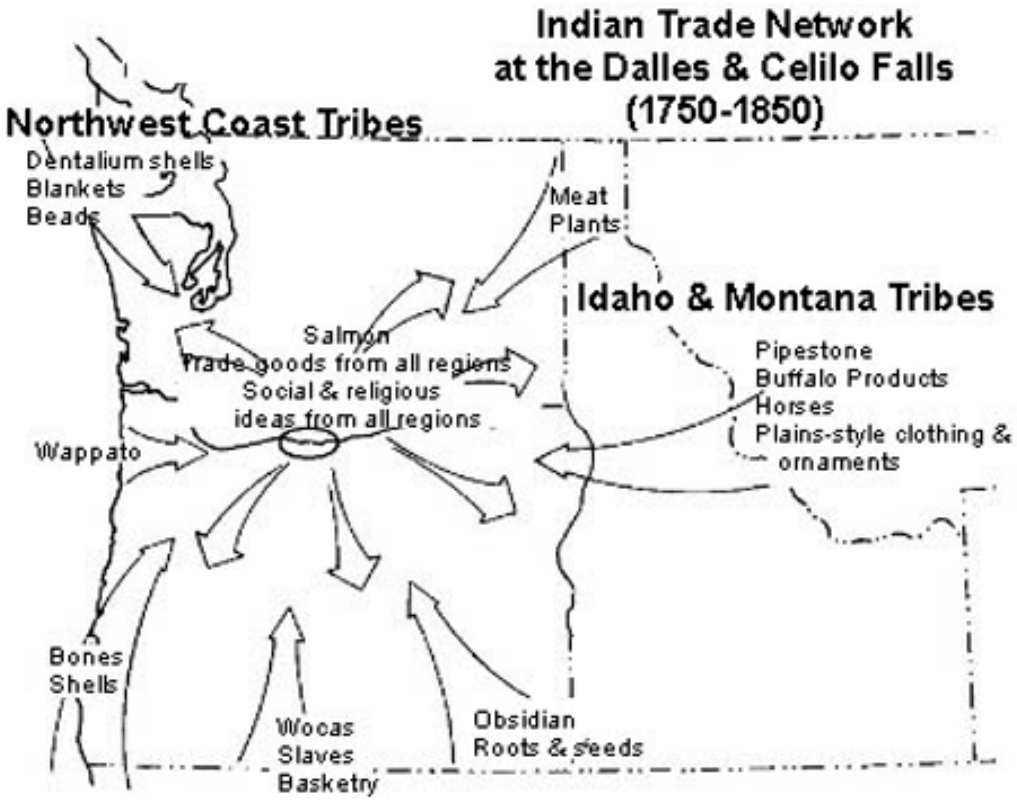
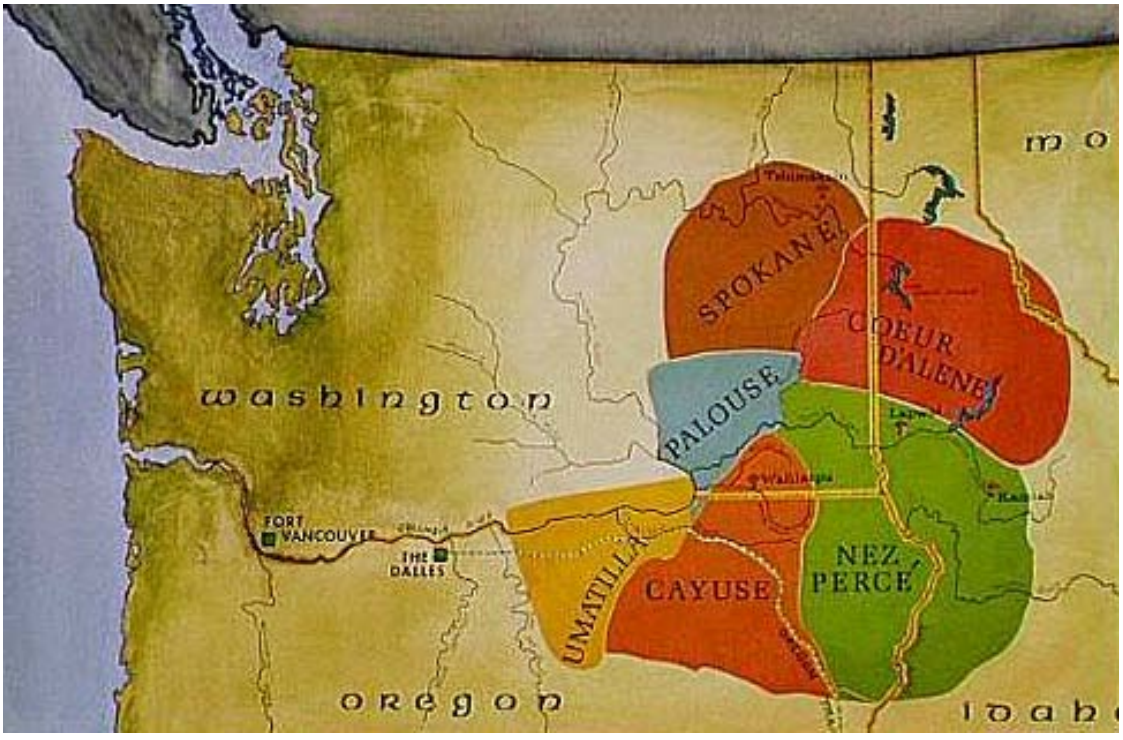
Indian Trade Network



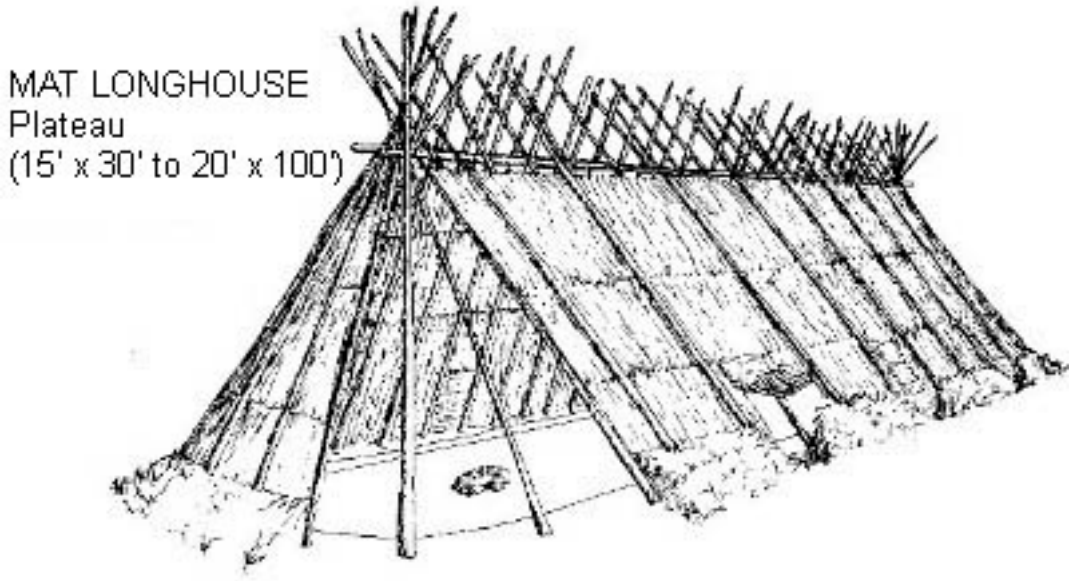
Cayuse and Neighboring Tribes



Tule Mat Longhouse

The longhouse, typically made with tule (bulrush) mats in the Columbia Plateau area, was the preferred housing structure of the Cayuse and nearby tribes. Interlocking poles of lodge pole pine formed a strong frame for the house. Two poles, stretched horizontally across the top, formed a ridgeline for the lodge and added further stability. The next step was to cover the entire structure with tule mats. The lodges were warm in the winter and cool in the summer. In wet weather, tules swelled with moisture not allowing rain to leak through. In dry warm weather, the tules shrank allowing air to move through structure, cooling it. Dirt piled along the bottom gave more insulation. Several families lived in one longhouse, so there were entrances all along the sides. Each family had an area in the longhouse, typically their fireplaces were set eight to ten feet apart.

Eastern Oregon Winter Dwellings



Indian Children

Educating the young in the traditions of their culture has always been an important and honored task for grandparents. Grandmothers often made traditional items of dress for their grandchildren. Grandparents were often responsible for moral instruction. Grandmothers would teach their granddaughters hide curing, clothing construction and ornamentation. A very strong tie with young and old was maintained.

Babies were kept in beaded cradle boards during their first year. The children learned at an early age to take pride in their ceremonial dress. Feathered headwear was made for children. Children often wore similar styles of clothing worn by their parents.

Gifts of new or special clothing were given at birthdays, recognition of honors or awards earned, graduation from school, etc.. These items were highly treasured and kept during much of the person's life. These gifts were a symbol of respect.

There were certain ceremonies or festivals held for children. They celebrated a child's first roots or first game ceremony where gifts were given to honor the accomplishments of a young person beginning to follow adult roles. A feast was held to celebrate a girl's first gathering of roots or a boy's first kill of wild game. The longhouse still holds an important place in the community for these coming of age ceremonies and other ceremonies of the Columbia Plateau people.

As they grew up, Indian children learned of their history and traditions so they would be prepared to raise the following generations of their people, thus creating the continuity of life that keeps a culture alive. As the Euro-Americans entered the area, Indian children were taught at the mission, where they had the opportunity to learn housekeeping, sewing, reading, writing, and farming as well as religion.